

REMARKS

Claims 1-48 are pending in the present application.

Drawing Changes

A minor change has been made to Fig. 6 to place it in better form for U.S. practice. More specifically, reference numeral 11, which indicates a medium, has been amended to --17-- because the same reference numeral is used in Figs. 1 and 8 to indicate a multi-function printer.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the above drawing change.

Embodiments of the Present Invention

One of the embodiments of the present invention is directed to a network photograph service system that includes a center server that works as a server computer for performing the central management of the image data (see, for example, paragraph [0009], lines 3-4 of the specification).

The present embodiment may also include a laboratory server that works as a so-called "printer server" installed in an individual laboratory, such as an over-the-counter minilab.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nguyen et al. (USP 5,515,511) in view of Yamasaki (USP 5,477,353). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner alleges, in the Office Action, that the network system of Nguyen has at least one laboratory server 11 and a center server 11 that is connected to the laboratory server 11. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In Nguyen, all of the servers 11 are file servers that merely function to 1) store files; and 2) supply data to the C-box 10 when requested by the C-box 10 (refer to col. 4, lines 38-40). Thus, Nguyen does not even distinguish the servers 11 between center servers and laboratory servers.

Further, Nguyen is totally silent as to the concept of providing "a center server" in a network photograph service/print order environment as required in each of the independent claims of the present application. For example, independent claim 1 is directed to a network photograph service system that includes "a center server connected to the laboratory server, said center server having a plurality of templates being registered therein, and said center server including a function of making the templates accessible on the network." Such a concept is not disclosed or even suggested in Nguyen.

As stated by the Examiner, in the Office Action, Yamasaki merely discloses a digital image processing system which uses a printer 13 to print digital images. Yamasaki, however, fails to disclose or even suggest the concept of the "center server," as recited in each of the independent claims of the present application.

Therefore, even assuming, *arguendo*, that Nguyen and Yamasaki can be combined, Nguyen in view of Yamasaki fails to disclose or even suggest the "center server" as recited in claim 1.

Yet further, with respect to independent claims 1, 27, 31, 33, 35, 40, 44, 45, and 48, both Nguyen and Yamasaki fail to disclose or even suggest a "laboratory server," in addition to the "center server," provided, for example, in an individual laboratory for providing a printing service.

Claims 2-24, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency upon claim 1.

Claim 26, dependent on claim 25, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 25.

Claims 28-30, variously dependent on claim 17, are allowable at least for their dependency upon claim 17.

Claim 32, dependent on claim 31, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 31.

Claim 34, dependent on claim 33, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 33.

Claim 36, dependent on claim 35, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 35.

Claim 38, dependent on claim 37, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 37.

Claim 42, dependent on claim 41, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 41.

Claim 46, dependent on claim 45, is allowable at least for its dependency upon claim 46.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this art grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

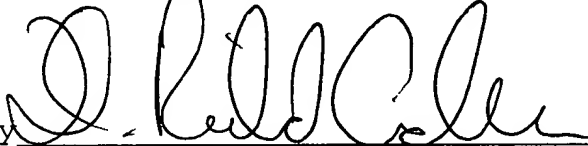
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (Reg. No. 40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Appl. No. 09/954,964

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): One (1) sheet of corrected formal
drawings - Fig. 6